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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (Caucasus)

DATE DISTR. 27 Apr. 1950

SUBJECT Jet Aircraft Observed near Aircraft
Plant No. 31 in Tbilisi

NO. OF PAGES 4

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PLACE

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DATE OF INFO

773 NFO.
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NO. OF ENCLS. 1
(LISTED BELOW)

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1. Rate of aircraft production:

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[redacted] aircraft being towed from the plant to and from the factory field. From late in 1947 until June of 1948, he often counted the number of planes being towed to the factory field. The PWs often discussed that another batch of 8 to 10 planes had arrived. An average of 7 to 10 planes was observed on the road every day. When told that other PWs said the plant produced only three planes a day, [redacted] this was impossible. He based his opinion on statements of Soviet workers and fellow PWs. [redacted] repeatedly counted 40 to 50 planes parked at the field. Such a number seemed plausible, as 7 to 10 aircraft arrived every day, remained at the field for 4 or 5 days for testing, and were then returned to the aircraft plant.

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2. Flying:

4. Besides test flights with jet fighters, there was little flying. Courier planes coming from MOSCOW landed at the field several times each month. According to Soviet workers, these courier planes brought orders for the aircraft plant. After a few hours, the aircraft took off again.

b. Five or six jet fighters were seen on the taxiway at the same time. They were started several times and exchanged once or twice every day. At first, noise similar to that produced by a two-stroke engine was heard. This continued for several minutes; then a high-pitched and loud howling sound was heard. Shortly afterwards, the plane began to taxi and had cleared the ground after 330 feet at most.

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Auth.: HR 70-2

Date: 3/8/78

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c. A former German officer and flight instructor for jet fighters, Baron von LILLIENTHAL, told the PWs that, according to his experience, these jet planes reach an altitude of at least 6,600 feet after 30 seconds, but that their speed was about 190 miles below the maximum speed attained by the German jet planes.

d. When the jet planes flew over the group of working PWs, a shrill howling sound was heard. The planes made a sudden landing approach without circling the field as the courier planes did. The jet planes rolled to a stop about 850 feet after touching the ground. Former air force officers estimated the landing speed at about 190 mph.

e. The aircraft were very maneuverable. Acrobatics performed at a considerable altitude were seen daily. A woman pilot was particularly excellent at this.

f. Ten Soviet Air Force officers were test pilots, including five women between 25 and 35 years old. The ground personnel totaled about 40 men.

g. The airfield was run by the Soviet Air Force. The test pilots sometimes wore civilian clothes.

3. Description of the observed jet fighters (see Annex):

a. One jet engine, mounted half under fuselage, half in front section of fuselage, length of engine about $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet, extending from nose as far as about 16 inches beyond leading edge of wing. Air exhaust outlet in conspicuous step of fuselage, cylinder-shaped turbine (source saw the loading of a turbine at the plant where he worked for some weeks in 1948). Diameter of turbine: 36 inches. Starting motor similar to DK motor. When it was pointed out that the length of the turbine was previously given at about 15 feet, the aircraft was $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. The section of the engine from the nose as far as the leading edge of the wing was one fourth the total length of the plane.

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b. Wings: Low-wing monoplane with little or no sweep-back and slightly dihedral. Leading edge tapering, trailing edge almost straight, tips rounded and very thin, wing span not more than 26.4 feet. Former air force officers compared the wing span with that of the Me-109, wing chord at root about 5 feet, at tips about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

c. Tail assembly: Single rudder assembly set above rear section of fuselage. Elevator assembly set at same level as rudder assembly. Pointed rear section of fuselage conspicuously projecting beyond tail assembly.

d. Landing gear: Two wheels under wings retracting outward into nacelles, distance of wheels 72 inches at most. Nose wheel under turbine, about 20 inches behind nose of fuselage, retracting inward.

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e. Fuselage: Slightly more compact than the Me-109, obtuse nose, rear tapering almost to a point. Section of fuselage forward of wings one fourth the total length of the fuselage. Length about 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Previously stated lengths of 30 and 36 feet were considered impossible. ☐ Diameter of fuselage at wing section 3.3 feet.

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f. Cockpit: Flat, about 16 inches high, front section with a pronounced slant. Rear section almost straight, beginning at leading edge and extending beyond trailing edge so that the groundward vision of observer was unlimited. Two seats (pilot and observer) facing in opposite directions. Flexiglass canopy.

g. Armament: Two rigid heavy machine guns projecting about 10 inches from each of the leading edges of wings ☐ putting covers over these four machine guns after each landing). According to air force officers, the machine guns were of 13.8 mm caliber, definitely not 7.65 mm. The first machine gun was mounted about 20 inches from the fuselage; the two machine guns of each wing were 30 inches apart. ☐ only aircraft fitted with four machine guns, he believed it possible that some of the aircraft were equipped with only two machine guns. The plane was also fitted with one 20 mm cannon firing through the air intake. A bomb release mechanism was not seen.

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h. Paint: Azure. A white Soviet star with a two inch red border was painted on each side of the fuselage and under each of the wings. ☐

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i. Fuselage and wings of smooth duraluminum.

k. One antenna extended from the center of the cockpit as far as the tail assembly.

4. The factory field about two miles east of the plant had an about 4,000 x 165-foot runway which had a 6-inch concrete layer. Five jet fighters could be parked side by side on the runway. Further details were not available.

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☐ Comment:

a. This report and two previous reports* constitute the only information available on a two-seat jet fighter (seats facing in opposite direction) built in Tbilisi. The data contained in the report must be viewed critically until the existence of such an aircraft design is confirmed by further returnees.

b. The statements contained in the second part of this report are incorrect. Approved For Release 2003/08/11 : CIA-RDP82-00457R004600370004-1
The observed jet fighter. A 13.8 mm machine gun has never existed in Germany,

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although there was a 13.1 mm machine gun 131. It is assumed that the observed armament was a Soviet type 12.7 mm machine gun. The location of the 20 mm cannon in the center of the air intake is likewise the result of an error in observation

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The length and wing span of the aircraft seem to be underestimated, a fact which may have led to the mistaken statement that the exhaust outlet of the turbine was a short distance behind the leading edge of the wings and not, as in reality, put in line with the trailing edge.

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1 Annex: Jet fighter observed in TBILISI

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